

# Rhode Island Reading First The “Rhode” to Reading Achievement

## General Guidance second round

Title I, Part B of the No Child Left Behind Act authorizes *Reading First* and delineates how the program will operate.

The purpose of *Reading First* is to ensure that all children learn to read well by the end of third grade. Quite simply, *Reading First* focuses on what works. The program will support proven methods of early reading instruction in classrooms.

The Rhode Island Reading First Program will:

- provide the necessary assistance to districts and schools to establish research-based reading programs for students in kindergarten through third grade. This includes selecting or developing effective instructional materials, programs, learning systems, and strategies that have been proven to teach reading (Appendix A).
- focus on providing high-quality and sustained professional development to ensure that all teachers, including special education and ESL teachers, have the knowledge and skills that they need to teach these programs effectively (Appendix B). Additionally, there will be assistance to districts and schools in preparing classroom teachers to effectively screen, identify, and overcome reading barriers facing their students.
- provide assistance for the selection, administration, and interpretation of screening, diagnostic, classroom-based progress monitoring, and outcome assessments with proven validity and reliability (Appendix C). This will enable teachers to measure where students are, monitor their progress, and provide any required intervention and/or support.

Taken together, the complimentary research-based programs, practices, and tools required by *Reading First* will give teachers the skills and support they need to teach all children to read fluently by the end of third grade.

**Eligible Applicants:** A school district (LEA) is eligible to apply for RI Reading First funds if it meets both of the following criteria:

1. The LEA is among the school districts in Rhode Island with the highest percentage of fourth grade students not meeting the standard on the NEW Standards Reference Examination in reading, based on the most current data available; **and**

2. The LEA has jurisdiction over at least one of the following:
  - a. The highest percentage of children who are counted for allocations under Title I, Part A, in comparison to other LEAs in the State;
  - b. A significant number or percentage of schools that are identified for school improvement under Title I, Part A; **or**
  - c. A geographic area that includes an area designated as an empowerment zone, or Enterprise community, under part I of subchapter U of chapter I of the Internal Revenue Code.

School districts with schools currently receiving funds through the Reading Excellence Act (REA) may, if eligible, apply for Rhode Island Reading First funds. Such applicants must meet all Rhode Island Reading First Program requirements and must use their RI Reading First funds to expand and strengthen their existing programs to ensure that all students can read at grade level (or above) by the end of third grade.

Charter Schools: If the State law recognizes a charter school as an LEA and the charter school meets the eligibility requirements outlined above, it may apply to the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) for a subgrant as an LEA. If a charter school is a school within an LEA, it may receive funding through its LEA's subgrant if it meets the criteria outlined above.

Private Schools: Funds awarded under Rhode Island Reading First are subject to the requirements of section 9501 of ESEA (Participation by Private School Children and Teachers).

**Population to be Served:** In order to be considered for a Rhode Island Reading First Program grant, an eligible applicant shall provide funds only to those schools that have the highest percentage of fourth grade students not meeting the standard on the NEW Standards Reference Examination in reading and have the highest percentage of students for allocations under Title I, Part A.

Source: *Reading First Guidance, April 2002*  
U.S. Department of Education

**Eligible LEAs (second round of subgrant applications):**

- Bristol-Warren
- Central Falls
- Newport
- Pawtucket
- Providence
- RI School for the Deaf
- West Warwick
- Woonsocket

**Eligible Charter Schools:**

CVS Highlander  
International  
Paul Cuffee

**Funds Available:** \$500,000

**Estimated Range of Awards:** The Rhode Island Department of Education anticipates making Rhode Island Reading First awards up to \$200,000 per school for the initial year, depending on the size and scope of the program and the number of teachers (staff) involved. In order to ensure sustainability after the end of the federal funding, the grant award for each school will be reduced in Years 2 and 3; however grantees are expected to maintain the same level of services and activities.

A school district may use up to 3.5% of its award for administrative costs.

Rhode Island Reading First funds **must supplement**, and not supplant, funds that LEAs and schools otherwise receive.

Year 2: Up to \$180,225 per school, depending on the size and scope of the program and the number of teachers (staff) involved.

Year 3: Up to \$144,000 per school, depending on the size and scope of the program and the number of teachers (staff) involved.

**Number of Awards:** Up to three (3) in Year 1

**Duration:** Initial one year award  
Renewable for two additional 1-year subgrants, contingent upon demonstrated progress

Schools that do not demonstrate adequate progress may be discontinued.

Because improvement in student achievement in reading is the major goal of RI Reading First, student achievement will be the major determinant of need for intervention or discontinuation of Reading First schools.

The RI Reading Leadership Team and the RIDE Reading Team will review Reading First LEA and Reading First school data as it is submitted according to the timeline. LEAs and schools will be at risk for discontinuance if the following conditions are not met:

- Increase the % of students reading at or above grade level on RI Reading First outcome assessments
- Increase the % of students performing at high levels of School Categorization based on NSRE/ELA in reading at Grade 4
- Decrease the % of students performing at the lowest levels of School Categorization based on NSRE/ELA in reading at Grade 4
- Failure to implement Reading First K-3 LEA/school plan

The number of students meeting and exceeding benchmark indicators for the grade level assessments will determine progress. Schools that do not make *Adequate Yearly Progress* targets, as described in the 2003 RIDE Accountability Notebook will be schools that are reviewed for intervention.  
(source: RI Reading First application)

## Guidance for Narrative Responses

The RIDE Reading First technical assistance sessions were designed to assist districts in framing their responses to the Narrative Section of the Sub-grant Application. The intent of each prompt is articulated below.

**1. During the Pre-application technical assistance sessions, what did the district discover about its current reading initiatives, strengths and weaknesses? (10 points)**

This response will articulate the work done by the district to determine the strengths and weaknesses of current programs and initiatives. The results of the district's comprehensive needs assessment, which may include the use of the *Planning and Evaluation Tool for Effective Schoolwide Reading Programs* and *A Consumer's Guide to Evaluating a Core Reading Program*, must be included and discussed. Needs must be strategically addressed and linked to the district's strategic plan. An exemplary response will include how each school's specific needs will be addressed through its school improvement plan.  
(see **Scoring Rubric**)

**2. Describe the district's process for selecting schools to be served by the Reading First Program. (10 points)**

This response details the process that the district has used to determine **which** of its schools have been selected to become Reading First schools. The criteria, those articulated by Reading First and any additional, must be listed. Explanation must include an explicit link to the comprehensive needs assessment and program review. In order to be considered for funding, the response must include the commitment of 100% of the K – Grade 3 teachers: this means ALL classroom teachers and reading support staff (e.g. reading specialist, special educators, ESL teachers, Title I support, etc.). The principal must also agree to participate fully. Documentation may include:

- List of all schools in LEA that serve elementary students, including the grades served in each school;
  - Assignments of teachers, reading specialists, reading coaches, special educators, ESL/Bilingual teachers and support staff for each school eligible for RI Reading First;
  - Analysis of demographic data for each elementary school with percentages of racial, ethnic, low-income populations, special education and ESL;
  - Analysis of students rated as achieved the standard or achieved the standard with honors on the 2002 New Standards Reference Examination in English Language Arts: Basic Understanding, including the disaggregated data for each subgroup.
  - Analysis of students at each level, K-3, who are reading at grade level;
  - Analysis of students at each level, K-3, who are receiving Title I, Special Education and ESL services;
  - List of schools eligible, in rank order according to their lowest performing schools (in greatest need) and highest percentage performing at the lowest level, to be served by Reading First;
  - Lists of other funds that schools are receiving;
  - Local assessment results or other evidence that would change the rank order;
  - District's capacity and commitment to serve the schools; and/or
  - Statement of LEA commitment to the Reading First Program.
- (See **Scoring Rubric**)

**3. The Rhode Island Reading First Program will require schools to use common instruments for screening, progress monitoring, and outcome assessments. Describe how the district will select and administer diagnostic assessments to be used to gain a more in-depth analysis of a student's strengths and weaknesses. (15 points)**

This response must articulate the district's commitment to the common assessments that have been approved for Rhode Island by national reviewers (Appendix C). It also demonstrates the district leadership team's knowledge of the *Analysis of Reading Assessment Measures*. The response must include an inventory of the diagnostic instruments currently used in the district/schools, how each links to the essential components of reading instruction, and the technical adequacy of each instrument. In order to meet the standard, the response must include a timeline for making district decisions for diagnostic assessments and the training for administration, analysis and using the results to plan instruction. Documentation may include:

- Signed commitment to implement Reading First assessment plan by all K-3 classroom teachers, specialists and special educators of schools eligible for RI Reading First;
- Schedule of RI Reading First assessments for each grade level with assessments identified; and/or,
- LEA's *Personal Literacy Program* (PLP) data collection and action plan format for students identified as reading below grade level.

(See **Scoring Rubric**)

**4. Describe the district's proposed strategies and programs for reading instruction. (15 points)**

This response must articulate how the district will address the results of the needs assessments, including the evaluation the current reading program. This response demonstrates the district's understanding of SBRR and how Reading First will close the instructional gaps which exist within individual schools and/or across grades. There is a demonstrated alignment between Reading First and other instructional programs (i.e. after school). The district, and each school, must commit to an uninterrupted block of reading time (minimum 90 minutes). Documentation may include:

- Signed commitment of all K-3 teachers to implement scientifically based reading program and maintain fidelity to the model, not layering on top of other programs;
- Signed commitment of all K-3 teachers to use of scientifically based instructional strategies to accelerate performance and monitor progress of students who are reading below grade level;
- The results of the district's review of reading programs and materials;
- Professional development plan for training staff to implement scientifically based instructional strategies;
- Criteria and timeline for review process of supplementary programs for intervention; and/or
- Class schedules dedicating daily 90 minute time block for uninterrupted reading instruction at Kindergarten –Grade 3.

(See **Scoring Rubric**)

**5. Describe the instructional materials that will support the K-3 reading program. (10 points)**

The response must articulate a plan to purchase instructional materials for each Reading First

classroom (in addition to the comprehensive reading programs). It must describe how these materials are aligned with the five core components of reading instruction, how they will be implemented, and how their use will be monitored. There must also be a commitment to use technology for assessment data –collection, analysis and reporting. Documentation may include:

- The results of the district’s review of reading programs and materials;
- List of grade-appropriate instructional materials to be acquired for use with scientifically based reading program;
- Inventory of existing education technology (software, digital curricula, etc.) used for the teaching of reading; and/or
- Plan for professional development and technical assistance in use of materials.

(See **Scoring Rubric**)

**6. Describe the district’s plan for Reading First instructional leadership. (10 points)**

This response articulates the district leadership team’s understanding of the RIDE plan for leadership. It identifies each member, lists his/her role, and names the person who will serve as liaison to the RIDE. The response must include the district’s commitment to implementing the coaching model in each Reading First school and to participating in the RIDE’s ongoing professional development and technical assistance. Building district capacity serves as the foundation by: describing the training that will be provided to district and building leaders, Reading First and others, in scientifically based reading instruction, the essential components of reading, the implementation of instructional programs, progress monitoring related to these programs, and providing levels of support and intervention for students at risk for reading difficulties; describing the role of Reading First coaches to support teams of teachers in implementing high quality reading programs for beginning readers, with an agreement not to assign Reading First coaches to classroom or “supplementary” teaching duties; and, outlining an implementation plan to coordinate Reading First goals with Title I, ESL and Special Education programs within Reading First sites and other schools across the district.

Documentation may include:

- Roster of District Leadership Team that includes current positions held within the LEA;
- Identified district representative for Reading First with description of duties;
- Resumes of members of the Leadership Team;
- Job Description, including duties and qualifications, for Reading First coaches;
- Description of duties for principals at Reading First sites;
- Dissemination Plan for information and coordination of training of district and building leadership to support Reading First in district;
- Timeline for review, identification and adoption of scientifically based reading program and diagnostic assessments; and
- Statement of commitment to support ongoing/long-term implementation of Reading First.

(See **Scoring Rubric**)

**7. Describe the district- and school-based professional development plan for Reading First. Appendix D contains a sample action plan. (20 points)**

This response must articulate the focus of support for ALL schools. For Reading First schools, that includes the district and school(s) commitment to RIDE’s ongoing professional

development plan. Each teacher must agree to participate in the Rhode Island Reading institutes and to work with the Reading First coach. Each principal must agree to attend ongoing sessions for administrators. The response must also address the district's and schools' professional development needs, as determined by the Reading First needs assessments. There must be a link to the district's strategic plan, the school's improvement plan, and the Article 31 (RI law) professional development plans. Documentation may include:

- Results of or plan for professional development needs assessment;
- Timeline for needs assessment administration, review/evaluation, communication of results and action planning;
- Policy for high-quality professional development and selecting high quality professional development providers;
- Process for selecting professional development providers who are knowledgeable of scientifically based reading research and experienced in program implementation;
- Specific content for the professional development activities (e.g., essential components of reading instruction, state reading standards, implementation of scientifically based reading programs and models for intervention, use of screening, diagnostic, and classroom-based assessments);
- Plan for offering a varied and full range of professional development experiences that impact teaching practices;
- Timeline/plan for classroom follow-up to professional development;
- Plan for training support staff in instructional intervention strategies for students in need of additional reading support;
- Action plans from strategic plan and/or school improvement plans; and/or
- Article 31 Professional Development Plans.

(See **Scoring Rubric**)

**8. Describe the district-based technical assistance that will support all schools, including those selected as Reading First schools. (10 points)**

The response describes how the district will coordinate ALL activities among the elementary schools (Reading First or not) in the district. It must also include how the district will differentiate assistance based on the needs of schools/teachers and how local technical assistance will coordinate with that provided by the RIDE and by external providers. Technical assistance must include how the district will lead participating schools in successful implementation of the model; in the monitoring of both student and program implementation progress; and in program evaluation to determine the effectiveness of Reading First activities. Technical assistance should be included in the district's statement of commitment. Documentation may include:

- Documents, such as meeting agendas, that indicate planned technical assistance;
- Working documents (e.g. a comprehensive needs assessment, the Consumer's Guide) that indicate planned technical assistance;
- Action plans for providing technical assistance;
- Flowchart/protocol for accessing technical assistance;
- Technical assistance request forms; and/or
- District-designed forms that may be used for data collection and/or progress toward stated benchmarks.

(See **Scoring Rubric**)

**9. Describe how the district will improve access to additional high quality print materials. (10 points)**

The response describes how the district will assist schools in obtaining access to a wide variety of engaging reading materials. Acquisition of materials must be based upon the needs determined by comprehensive assessments and evaluations. This is an opportunity to explain the coordination among federal, state, or local programs, including the district's Reading First program. Documentation may include:

- Detailed budget pages from other funding sources;
- Letter(s) of support from federal, state, or local programs; and/or
- Letter of support from the local library.

(See **Scoring Rubric**)

**10. Describe the district's evaluation strategies for the Reading First Program. (20 points)**

The response will articulate the district's commitment to the RIDE evaluation plan.

*Proposed Timeline of Evaluation Procedures*

**Year One**

Fall 2003 Upon Award of Sub-grants	RI Reading First and control schools will administer appropriate assessments (in accordance with State Assessment Plan) to gather baseline data at grades Kindergarten through 3.  RI Reading First staff will conduct observations of classroom teachers to collect baseline data for implementation of SBRR practices.  External evaluator will conduct initial surveys and interviews.
Fall 2003	External evaluator will finalize evaluation design with RI Reading First staff
Spring 2004	RI Reading First and control schools will administer outcome measures.
May 2004	RI Reading First schools will submit summation testing data to external evaluator. Follow-up surveys and interviews will be conducted (necessary in the event of staff changes for next school year).
August 2004	External evaluator will provide summation of individual Reading First LEAs, Reading First schools and the state effort to RI Reading First Reading Leadership Team and RIDE. The report will include the following baseline information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Progress of Reading First LEAs and schools in reducing the number of grades 1-3 students reading below grade level;</li><li>• Percentage of increase of SEA and RI Reading First students reading at grade level or higher, disaggregated by low-income, major racial/ethnic groups, LEP and special education; and</li><li>• RI Reading First LEAs and schools making the largest gains in reading achievement.</li></ul>



## Year Two

September 2004	RI Reading First and control schools will administer pre-tests to all students in original schools and Year 2 schools.
April - May 2005	RI Reading First and control schools will administer post-tests
	RI Reading First schools will submit summary evaluation data to external evaluator
October 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• External evaluator will provide summation of statewide effort to Reading First Leadership Team and RIDE Board of Regents. The report will include the following information:</li> <li>• Progress of RI Reading First LEAs and schools in reducing the number of grades 1-3 students reading below grade level;</li> <li>• Percentage of increase of SEA and RI Reading First student reading at grade level or higher, disaggregated by low-income, major racial/ethnic groups, LEP, and special education;</li> <li>• RI Reading First LEAs and schools making the largest gains in reading achievement; and</li> <li>• RI Reading First LEAs and schools whose funding is at risk for discontinuance for lack of progress in raising K-3 student achievement.</li> </ul>

## Year Three

September 2005	Repeat cycle of 2004-05 – Pre-testing for all students in all cohorts of Reading First
September 2006	<p>Submit interim report to the US Department of Education. The report will include the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress of RI Reading First LEAs and schools in reducing the number of grades 1-3 students reading below grade level;</li> <li>• Percentage of increase of SEA and Reading First students reading at grade level or higher, disaggregated by low-income, major racial/ethnic groups, LEP, and special education;</li> <li>• RI Reading First LEAs and schools making the largest gains in reading achievement.</li> <li>• RI Reading First LEAs and schools whose funding has been discontinued for lack of progress in raising K-3 student achievement.</li> </ul>

The Superintendent must provide assurance that the district and each school will use the required state assessments for screening, progressing monitoring and outcomes; commit to continue the Reading First evaluation process, collecting and submitting data, even though direct Reading First support has been discontinued and, if selected, the school/district will participate in the national evaluation. The district must: articulate grade level outcome goals and the plan for measuring these goals; describe the plan for progress monitoring toward these outcome goals; and describe the electronic process for reporting reading achievement data disaggregated by low-income, major racial/ethnic groups, LEP and special education for K-3 students in Reading First schools. This process will use unique student identifiers for the purposes of tracking student information during Reading First. The leadership team and each

school must commit to reviewing and analyzing achievement data to evaluate the effectiveness of Reading First activities at the school and district level and to detail a plan for intervention for schools that are not making significant progress (e.g. professional development, technical support, etc.). Documentation may include:

- Assurances signed by the Superintendent;
  - Action plan for reviewing and identifying diagnostic instruments;
  - Signed statement of commitment from the District Leadership team;
  - Forms for collecting data and reporting progress: and/or
  - Inventory of technology (hardware and software) to support data collection/analysis
- (See **Scoring Rubric**)

**11. Describe the district's plan for the use of the Rhode Island Reading First funds. (10 points)**

This response articulates the district's commitment to the expenditures dictated by the RIDE and explains how the balance of the funds will be spent. Documentation must include:

- Budget Description (Attachment F-1)
- Budget Detail Pages (Attachment F-2 through F-6)

(See **Scoring Rubric**)

**12. Describe the district's overall management plan for Reading First. (10 points)**

The response provides final details for the implementation of Reading First. The response must include an organizational chart and matrix of staff, including the amount of time to be dedicated to Reading First. There is a clear plan that links the district's needs to an implementation plan, which will ensure that the district will meet the objectives of Reading First. (See **Scoring Rubric**)